

Statewide Forest Assessment

Review responses

The deadline to comment on the draft Statewide Forest Assessment ended Friday April 16, 2010. Draft responses are listed below in the order which they were received:

1. Brian Cruser, ACF, TSP
2. Bill Hoover, Purdue University
3. David Haberman, Department of Religious Studies
4. Linda Elder
5. Mary Mulligan, Brownfields Specialist
6. Rhonda Baird, Indiana Forest Alliance
7. Ashley Mulis, Indiana Urban Forest Council
8. Kenneth G. Day, US Forest Service
9. Mark Reiter, Division of Fish and Wildlife
10. David Glista, Indiana Department of Transportation, Office of Environmental Services
11. Elizabeth A Jackson, Indiana Forestry & Woodland Owners Association
12. Cheryl Gettelfinger, Carmel Urban Forestry
13. Trish Eccles, Trees Inc.
14. Tim Maloney, Hoosier Environmental Council

A. Brian Cruser, ACF, TSP

My name is Brian Cruser. I worked for Indiana Division of forestry for almost 15 years and have been a consulting forester since 1996. Upon review of the state assessment, I wanted to point out what I consider a gap in the analysis of invasive species. I have worked in central and southeastern Indiana for almost 30 years. During the past 20 years I have noticed a significant establishment of bush honeysuckle. This invasive has become a large concern for forestland owners due to the loss of forest diversity in their forestlands. I have witnessed many forests where bush honeysuckle has dominated the forest understory, eliminating native competition and preventing forest regeneration from occurring as the canopy is opened from a harvest or storm damage. In these forests, the ground becomes void of plant cover and few shrubs or trees are able to become established. I have not found any signs of native species that won't succumb to bush honeysuckle competition nor any diseases that seem to limit the spread of the shrub. In your report, there was no mention of bush honeysuckle. There was also no mention of the risk of this invasive to forests in southeastern Indiana. To date, I have found significant establishments of bush honeysuckle from Richmond to Versailles, and from Hartsville to Aurora. It is my belief that this invasive will impose a significant risk to timber production in an area of the state that produces some of the best fine hardwoods.

Sincerely,

A. Brian Cruser, ACF, TSP
ABC Forest Management

Bill Hoover, Purdue University

Comments on Statewide Forest Assessment

W.L. Hoover
4/13/10

p. 14 - 16.1% of Indiana's forest land protect by easements of some form. This is much higher than I expected. What is the comparable % in other states in the region, nation?

p. 15 - Given that soil movement off of crop and pasture land is the state's biggest water quality issue, is there a plan to work with NRCS and IDA Soils Division to increase use of forest land as buffers. Sediment traps are expensive and must be cleaned out periodically. Can small flows in upper reaches be directed to specially managed "wetland forests," new created in most cases requiring taking/easing land from private owners.

p. 16 - Very severe category occurs primarily in north I assume because of deeper soils? This may be counter intuitive to many readers given the rougher terrain in unglaciated southern region.

p. 17 - To what extent does forest buffering capture surface flow from crop and pasture land? Isn't through flow during storm events a major problem? Of course a 300' buffer is unrealistic to begin with so it doesn't matter. Ref. the question asked, is detailed information available on NRCS website that can be referenced?

p. 18 - "Surface water intake" for public water supplies. Does this refer to catchments and recharge zones for wells? It's not clear to me.

p. 20 - You're not going to summarize for reader the primary causes of impairment?

p. 24 - areas in white are <6% slopped? No key provided.

p. 29 - Is there such a thing as map overload in a document? Is it practicable to put detailed map(s) on a website?

p. 30 - In general this is one of the most important and complicated interactions to present. It's a county and local issues, based on planning, zoning, subdivision, and other development ordinances. This map will strike most readers as not logical. There's hardly any woodlot or forest patch that doesn't have a house in it, except protected lands.

p. 35 - A map like this needs further description. This is a "dreamer's map" I assume? There is clearly not the colored area shown currently in wetlands and buffers.

p. 44 - The 10.7% in classified is in addition to the 16.1% protected land obviously. But, what do you know about turnover and change in use of classified lands?

p. 46 - The discussion is relevant in general, but I take the position that the majority of forestland in Indiana is a lifestyle investment and the primary goal of owners is to minimize expenditures. Additional income would of course be welcomed by these owners, but investigations would be needed to determine what portion of additional income would be reinvested in the forestland. I'd assume not much.

p. 61 - Appendix F. Wow, one heck of a list. It would be useful to provide some detail on how these organizations participated. Did each have a representative at one of the four input

sessions, did someone from these organizations reply to the survey, etc. Did the survey go to individuals not representing one of these groups?

David Haberman, Indiana Forest Alliance

Greetings! And thank you for this opportunity to comment on the Statewide Forest Resource Assessment. I begin by noting that among the top concerns regarding the forests in Indiana are 1) fragmentation, 2) conservation of soil and water, 3) the spread of invasive species, 4) conservation of biodiversity, and 5) the availability of land for public recreation. All of these issues are extremely important! Since we citizens of Indiana have much more say about what happens on our public lands than we do on private lands, I address my comments to our practices regarding public forests. In particular, I want to make an argument for ending the practice of commercial logging on our state and national forests in the state. There is too little forest in the hands of the public in this state, and we need to do all we can to protect it. By ending commercial logging on public lands, we would address each of the five concerns mentioned above:

1) Fragmentation: Commercial logging further fragments forests by constructing roads, skidder trails, log yards and forest openings. Our public forests are the best place in the state to nurture mature forests that are protected from fragmentation. The few remaining roadless areas in particular need to be protected from road building.

2) Conservation of soil and water: Our public lands are some of the best storehouses and purifiers of soil and water. Commercial logging operations cause erosion of soil, and increased disturbance of both streams and the natural water filter systems that mature forests offer.

3) The spread of invasive species: Logging trucks are some of the most effective means of bringing invasive species into a previously mature forest. The forest defenses are weakened as the forest is logged, and the tires on the logging equipment bring in seeds of invasive species and plow the way for other invasive species to enter the forest.

4) Conservation of biodiversity: This is one of the most important issues facing us today! Rather than competing with the private timber industry (often aided by government subsidies) and bringing down the price of timber in the state, those in charge of our public forests should be restoring those lands to a state of maturity so that they may serve as reserves for biodiversity. This is desperately needed as we move forward into a world in which a human caused mass extinction is underway and accelerating. Perhaps we need to place the management of the public forests in the hands of forest restorative ecologists, rather than those trained in timber management.

5) The availability of land for public recreation: Again, the public forests are the ideal place for this. When an area is commercially logged it is taken out of the realm of enjoyment by bird-watchers, hikers, backpackers, and others who seek an experience in a natural world untrammelled by human presence. The recreational and spiritual value of our public forests can not be overestimated. We need to be putting more forest into public ownership that is protected from commercial logging. And certainly, we need to maintain those special areas in the state that have been off limits to commercial logging and designated "wilderness" areas. The Back Country Area in Yellowwood and Morgan-Monroe State Forests is a good case in point. This area is comprised of around 3000 acres of mature forest land that was set aside in the early

1980s by then Governor Orr "to be enjoyed by the wilderness seeker as a place of solitude and repose that will offer an experience of visiting a forested area looking much the same as it may have appeared a century and a half ago." The Division of Forestry now has plans to begin commercially logging this area on 20-year cycles. How on earth would this address the public demand for more recreational places? Or for that matter, how would such a plan address the other four concerns above. What is called for more and more these days is a plan that will enable our severely compromised forest systems to return to a state of healthy maturity. Commercial logging should have no role in this effort on public lands. As a first measure, please do all you can to insure that the Back Country Area be kept off limits to commercial logging. Thank you.

Sincerely,

David L. Haberman
Professor
Department of Religious Studies
Sycamore Hall 230
Indiana University
Bloomington, IN 47405

Linda Elder

Just wanted to voice my opinion and let you know I agree with the survey from over 1300 forest owners, conservation people and land managers that we need to conserve and maintain our soil and water resources, control invasive species and conserve biodiversity. There aren't many forested lands left in the US and we as a state have an obligation to not allow for further degradation and development of what we have. Thanks for all you can do.

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Linda Elder

Mary Mulligan, Brownfields Specialist

The draft Indiana Statewide Forest Assessment 2010 is very interesting and has a wealth of information. I enjoyed all of the colored maps with accompanying legends. However, I think the maps can be more useful if locations throughout the state are plotted on all the maps (same locations on all maps). When the average person looks at the maps they can recognize places/areas and see how their place/area compares to another. I further suggest that the information in the legend be described so the average person can understand the significance of the information presented on the map. There is brief information that precedes each map, if a little more information could be added I think it could be even more useful, for example, highlight areas where the asset or benefit does not exist and/or areas where the asset or benefit is in abundance. Perhaps this would help in developing more local programs to improve the urban forest in areas that need significant improvement. Perhaps!

Thanks for the opportunity to comment,

Mary Mulligan, Brownfields Specialist
City of Gary – Department of Environmental Affairs
(219) 882-3000

Rhonda Baird, Indiana Forest Alliance

Indiana State Forest Assessment Draft – Comments from Indiana Forest Alliance

Note: Pages are numbered according to their numbering in the Adobe format, not according to page numbers indicated in the document. Also, italicized words are quoted from the assessment document. Comments are in regular font.

P. 5 Bias: New technologies have been developed that improve our understanding of complex forest ecosystem interactions, the efficiency with which we harvest, create and market products derived from forests and how we communicate, learn and disseminate information about this valuable resource. But perennial conflict remains around balancing a resource base with an increasing user population. And society has created new issues and new roles for forests as providers of biomass for electricity generation, feed stock for cellulosic ethanol and storehouses of carbon to mitigate changes in the atmosphere.

There is bias here indicating an emphasis on forests as resources only. The assessment should broaden the conversation about forests more than it does. There is potential to include new views of the forest ecosystems statewide. Including biomass in this part of the document, when it is not included later in the assessment is problematic. If it is going to be included in later strategies, it should be included now and input allowed. The same holds for “changes in the atmosphere.”

P. 7 Data gaps – how credible can this management regime be without this data?

P. 9 Economic bias: Indiana’s unique and high quality forests are a part of the fabric of Midwestern wealth and development. The issues that are paramount in determining the sustainability of forest resources have far ranging impacts on Hoosier jobs, health, and quality of life, among other things.

P. 10 Biased wording in all surveys: In June 2009, approximately 1,400 natural resource professionals, academics, industry and private landowners participated in a survey to determine the relative importance and level of concern around issues facing Indiana’s forests. These surveys throughout the assessment process have included terms that have multiple meanings to stakeholders and are often confusing. Also, the questions asked in the surveys have been based on a marked bias toward timber harvesting and forest management for economic values (reference Rhonda Baird’s call to Chris Gonso at the conclusion of the last stakeholder on-line survey and release of its results).

p. 11 Fragmentation: Just as extensive fragmentation can impair the ability of migratory birds to find suitable nesting sites; it can also impair the ability of woodland owners to market timber. A clearer definition or explanation is needed here.

p. 19 Soil & Water: Undisturbed forests are unsurpassed in their ability to preserve and enhance soil resources and water quality. Forest cover, especially around creek and river bottoms and along drainages or riparian areas, acts as a buffer inhibiting excessive impairment from surrounding exposed soil or agricultural applications. Since this is the case, it is imperative that more undisturbed forests and more riparian buffers be put in place.

Best management practices (“BMPs”) that protect soil and water quality during timber harvest, are required on approximately 26% of forestland managed in the State and practiced on managed lands by responsible stewards to insure resource quality and availability in the future. Does this mean that BMPs are only required on a percentage of state forests? That is not the impression given when talking to DoF about this issue— when it is asserted that all timber sales require BMPs.

p. 20 Economic Bias/Bias toward Timber Management: Natural Resource Conservation Service (“NRCS”) erosion hazard ratings incorporate erodibility, slope and length of slope and are used to assess risk for putting a dirt road or trail on forestland. This measure can inform forestry practices that include constructing log landings and laying out skid or fire trails. This again assumes that all forests are managed for timber production access and does not take into account other desired aims and objectives, such as increasing forest cover, ecosystem services, etc.

In answer to the question at the bottom of this page (numbered p.16 on the document), yes, more detailed breakout maps—particularly for Brown, Orange, Lawrence, Greene and Sullivan would provide for better analysis and illustration. p. 21 In answer to the question at the bottom of the page: Yes, inclusion of maps detailing riparian buffer zones would be useful. Perhaps comparing counties with more forest cover with counties in northern Indiana with low forest cover would be most useful for this assessment.

p. 22 Wells and surface drinking water are critical to the health of communities in the state. Undisturbed forests are the best protection of those watersheds. Timber production contributes to the sedimentation of open water sources and inability of the forest to protect those bodies of water. This needs to be more fully brought forward in the assessment.

p. 23 As described above, percentage forestland in a watershed is not the only determinant of a watershed’s quality, but the percentage cover does correlate well with the above impaired stream miles. Only 3 of Indiana’s 308 watersheds are forested at greater than 80% and these all have 0 impaired stream miles. 17 watersheds have 65- 80% forest cover and of these 82% have less than 10% impaired stream miles.

This seems to be a reasonable justification for increased reforestation along waterways.

p. 28 Please do include a citation for this statement.

p. 30 With regard to invasives, the statements are very broad. Not all invasives are the same, so greater specificity would help. Also, invasives are more likely to be present in disturbed areas (utility corridors, log yards, clearings, even in single tree selection areas). This needs to be acknowledged by the assessment. Without presenting this fact, accurate education cannot take place. Especially, considering the grave threat it poses to forest sustainability.

p. 33 Map question: Yes, please do include a break out map—particularly one that represents corridors. Invasive species: Invasive species spread by a variety of means but have been shown to travel effectively through maintained forest corridors. Those shown below are traveled by people, machines and animals and are maintained in early successional habitat to promote their accessibility and designated use. This highlights the importance of reducing the amount of early successional habitat maintained in forests—especially public forests.

Biodiversity: The data gaps identified need to be filled and the evidence presented more clearly before this part of the assessment would be complete. The emphasis on removing mature Oak species for timber production over the past decades should also be factored into this assessment.

p. 40 Rare Forest Communities Map. It would be nice to have more detailed information about these forest communities given in an appendix or on the map. It also is important to note that the Heritage Database is not complete by any means.

p. 41 Forest Patches Map – This again highlights the importance of creating and maintaining riparian buffers and building upon them.

p. 42 Yes, please do include a break out map with a county that has high priority zones.

Recreation: This subject deserves more than a mere nod. The kinds of recreation offered on the public forests, the trends toward greater usage of mountain biking or horseback riding, for example, and the impact of recreational usage on forest ecosystems should have been included in this assessment. Also, the map identifies public lands, but does not distinguish between forest and open water. Lakes are important for recreation, but they are not forest ecosystems. Using that acreage to indicate forest recreation is deceptive.

Wood products: More discussion on the distinction between timber programs on public lands and private lands should be included in the assessment and analysis. Indiana Forest Alliance's position on public land timber production is unequivocal: There should be no commercial activity on public forestlands. At the same time, Indiana Forest Alliance is committed to seeing timber products that are truly sustainably harvested promoted throughout the state. IFA remains critical of SFI and FSC certification. Creation of the web-based database to bring timber producers together is a good step. Increased education and encouraging the conversion of open land to forest for wood products should be included in the assessment—rather than just depending upon existing forests to carry the industry.

IFA is glad the Division of Forestry included relevant issues in the Other Issues Section. With regard to deer, recognizing the role of maintaining early successional habitat and timber harvests on creating deer habitat would be appropriate. In general, this document highlights the points that to serve the highest priorities indicated in the assessment process, strategies to limit openings in the forest (including roads and log yards), to increase the protection of undisturbed forests on slopes and in riparian zones, and to encourage reforestation working slowly out from areas with rare forest composition or increased biodiversity are high priority and should be included in the strategy submitted with this process. Also, efforts to re-evaluate the distribution and role of timber products and markets within the state to build up local economies could be an important addition to strategies.

Ashley Mulis, Indiana Urban Forest Council

Dear Division of Forestry Statewide Planning Committee:

The Indiana Urban Forest Council is a non-profit organization formed at the suggestion of the US Forest Service in 1991 and partners with the IDNR, Community and Urban Forestry program. The mission of the IUFC is to be a leader in the promotion, protection and

improvement of Indiana's community forests, while being an educational and technical resource for our communities.

The Indiana Urban Forest Council, Inc. (IUFC) board of directors and much of our membership has collectively reviewed the Indiana Statewide Forest Assessment. We applaud the efforts of the great many people it required to compile this enormous amount of research, which has gone into forming a statewide plan for Indiana's forest resource. We also recognize the large number of issues raised by a statewide constituency.

Some of the top concerns listed in the report, such as fragmentation and protection of waterways for drinking water, are considerable issues in Indiana cities. However, in our minds, there was a major omission of important details. It did not escape our notice the well-known fact that 80% of Indiana's population lives in cities in towns was not included anywhere in the document, not even in the urban forestry section listed dubiously under "other issues". If 80% of the citizenry in Indiana reside in cities and towns, and the urban forest resource has been scientifically recognized as a method of mitigating such issues as water pollution, air quality issues, and flooding, we find ourselves asking why urban forestry comes across in the document as an afterthought.

The federal government through the USDA Forest Service funds approximately 80% of the urban forestry program in our state and has done so for nearly 20 years. As the issues of poor air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, water quality and flooding continue to grow in scope and magnitude, the support for increasing canopy coverage in places most Americans call home is well-documented nationwide. Indiana appears to be lacking in this recognition to the detriment of its citizens and natural resources.

The Community and Urban Forestry program housed in the Division of Forestry is staffed by extremely professional and visionary people, as is the case in most of the Department of Natural Resources. Through a mutual partnership with this office we have witnessed an apparent lack of support and recognition of the validity of urban forestry as a discipline within your division, despite the large amount of federal dollars being allocated specifically for the program. In fact, new study results from the federally funded Sample Urban Statewide Inventory (SUSI) specifically addresses the great value our urban forest resource is providing the cities and towns across Indiana.

As difficult economic times continue to challenge state budgets, we understand the directives handed down are not always optional. However, the Indiana Urban Forest Council respectfully requests the Indiana Division of Forestry place a reasonable and equitable level of importance on educating our communities on the value of increasing canopy coverage, protection of critical resources, and assistance in its conservation. In addition, where appropriate, increase in canopy coverage to ensure the health and economic viability in Indiana. The IDNR Community and Urban Forestry program excels with these tasks with limited resources available to them.

The Indiana Urban Forest Council strives to fairly speak for its membership, which currently, includes municipal and corporate members representing more than 400,000 Hoosiers. We appreciate the opportunity to editorialize on the plan for the future of Indiana's forest resources. We welcome the chance to provide any further information necessary. Thank you again for the opportunity.

Sincerely,

The Indiana Urban Forest Council Board of Directors

Kenneth G. Day, US Forest Service

Mr. John Seifert
State Forester
IDNR, Division of Forestry
402 W. Washington Street
Room W296
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Jack,

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Indiana Statewide Forest Assessment 2010. This comprehensive review will be valuable in planning and implementing changes in natural resources statewide now and into the future.

My staff and I reviewed the document and are sending comments for finalizing the work you have started.

The second paragraph under the heading of Goals and Objectives on page 1 was slightly confusing. The third use of the assessment was "as a requirement of the USFS, S&PF." That is not really a use but a requirement. The confusion is added to two paragraphs down where it states the assessment is a requirement of the Farm Bill. It seems like that could be clarified some.

On page 9, under Roadless tracts. It seems that a different title would be more appropriate. Roadless has national implications that bring about many continuing debates. Some special interest groups view roadless as a precursor to wilderness. This section of the Assessment is really about fragmentation. It would also be beneficial to define the sizes used on the map, for example how big is medium?

The color coding used on pages 22 and 23 is inconsistent. On page 22 the low percentage (0-10%) is associated with red color and ranges up to blue, while on page 23, the color coding is the opposite with the low percentages (0-2%) blue and ranging up to red. I suggest the color coding scheme be similar for all maps in the increasing ranges of categories. It makes it easier for the reader to think about the least or minimum up to the maximum rather than a variety of color schemes where the reader has to think about what way the color coding is going.

Page 28 displays the emerald ash borer, Gypsy moth, and kudzu Locations. Does the map display the most recent emerald ash borer information? It seems that there are counties and townships in this area that are not shown. The map indicates that only the northeast part of the state has emerald ash borer and Gypsy moth.

Page 32, paragraph 5 is incorrect regarding the status of cerulean warbler. - The text says this species is federally endangered, which is incorrect. The cerulean warbler is not federally listed. Please see;

<http://www.fws.gov/ecos/ajax/speciesProfile/profile/speciesProfile.action?sPCODE=B09I>

Finally page 38, paragraph 2 seems to read as a recommendation. It is my understanding that a strategy document was being prepared separately that would contain recommendations for management.

Again, I thank you for the opportunity to give input on this Assessment. This document provides a wealth of information that will benefit us all.

Sincerely,

/s/ Kenneth G. Day
KENNETH G. DAY
Forest Supervisor

Mark Reiter, Division of Fish and Wildlife

April 14, 2010

Division of Forestry
Statewide Assessment Steering Committee

RE: Statewide Forest Assessment

Dear Statewide Assessment Steering Committee members,

The Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) has reviewed the Statewide Forest Assessment and has comments as it pertains to deer management. We feel there are several misleading figures and statements that need to be addressed before a final document is accepted.

The map of deer-vehicle collisions on page 47 of the Statewide Forest Assessment should not be considered an acceptable "proxy" to defining deer populations within the state of Indiana. This map is more a function of interactions between humans and deer, and not representative of the status of deer density within the state. Interstates and cities are clearly defined on this map, where the interface between human activity and the wild deer populations overlap. On this map, rural areas where there may be more deer but fewer humans can be underrepresented in terms of deer population. Likewise, areas with high human populations and lower deer densities may be overrepresented.

The total number of deer vehicle collisions is actually a poor indicator of deer density, as it is greatly influenced by the human population, road characteristics, and deer populations. Creating a map on strictly one of these components is misleading. For example, Marion County in 2009 reported 124 deer-vehicle collisions that year. By comparison, Switzerland County reported 55. Looking at those numbers alone, it would appear Marion County has significantly more deer than Switzerland County. However, the harvest from the 2009 deer hunting season for Marion County in was 310, while Switzerland County reported 3,221 deer. It is clear that Switzerland County has far superior habitat for deer, and the number of collisions as it pertains to total miles driven within each county, (between 10-15 collisions/billion miles traveled in Marion County, and between 500-600 collisions/billion miles traveled in Switzerland County) show that the total number of deer collisions is not simply a function of more deer. The statement on page 54 that again says deer collision data is a "rough proxy for deer population

distribution” is incorrect. Since county wide densities are not collected, we recommend using harvest information or trends in harvest information, which can readily be found on our DFW website or by contacting the state deer biologist.

Additionally, state parks and state historic sites are prohibited from hunting and fishing by Indiana Administrative Code 312 IAC 9-2-11, which states in Section 11a. “An individual must not take or chase a wild animal, other than a fish, in a state park or a state historic site.” To say that they are “exempted from statewide hunting season controls” as it states on page 47 is misleading. The DFW does not grant the Division of Parks and Reservoirs (DPR), who oversees wildlife management within the state parks and state historic sites, any special exemption with regards to altering the hunting seasons for deer. Rather, the DFW works with DPR staff to set up control hunts, which are only allowed by order of the director to help control deer populations by 312 IAC 14-22-6-13, which supersedes the previous regulation. All browse and exclosure surveys conducted within the park are to scientifically defend the allowance of these hunts. Allowing hunting in these parks has significantly helped reduce the deer herd within the parks and allow the biodiversity and understory to return from its previously denuded state.

The DFW is asking the Steering Committee to please make the necessary corrections to your draft to better illustrate what is accurately occurring within Indiana.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Mark Reiter
Director, Division of Fish and Wildlife

David Glista, Indiana Department of Transportation, Office of Environmental Services

All,

I am posting comments regarding the Draft 2010 Statewide Forest Assessment from the INDOT Office of Environmental Services.

Page 20, Percentage of Impaired Stream Miles by 10-Digit Watershed map: Some of these streams are impaired for reasons that are unrelated to forest cover, like point-source pollution.

Page 30, Home Density and Forest Cover map: This relationship is not explained well. Also, what about areas with high home density and low forest density? Wouldn't those have a high rate of ornamental landscape planting and a reduced tendency for existing tree canopy to shade out newly-introduced species?

Page 31, Invasive Species Risk map: The relationship between the previous maps and this one is questionable. Based on the previous maps, the green areas would seem to be a higher risk for invasives because of maintained corridors through forest and increased use of landscape planting. What's the basis for saying those areas are low risk?

Page 35, Buffered Wetlands map: The statement, "Generally, researchers have found increases in the proportion for forest cover correlates to increases in forest species richness and diversity within these groups." - Better explanation here would be helpful.

Appendix D, Fragmentation: Is Wikipedia an acceptable source for reference/citation?

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

David Glista

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Elizabeth A Jackson, Indiana Forestry & Woodland Owners Association

My biggest concern is that a variety of factors in the assessment process lead to little to no attention on the northern 1/3 to 2/3 of the state. It would be a travesty to create strategies and policy that ignore these northern woods. Regardless of the process, the main reason they are ignored is because the total acreage and volume is so much smaller than in the south. But their ecological contribution is important and it would be a big mistake to ignore them into oblivion. One could argue that the less you have of something the more you should cherish it and keep it safe. This assessment in its current status would tend toward discounting the importance of the northern woods.

It may be that no reweighting or adjustment of the assessment can properly account for these forests but somehow they still need to be in the equation. A crazy way to handle it would be to come up with a small set of strategies specific to the north, with a general goal such as "maintaining the ecological integrity of our northern forests" or "increasing the importance of the northern 2/3 forests to the total state forests."

On a more specific note, I thought the invasives assessment was not well explained. The map identifies the northern part of the state as having the most invasives risk but then the outcome was to focus on the south. The reason for not focusing on the north should be spelled out rather than implied.

The same with soil and water conservation resources. The northern part of the state shows the most imperiled waterways, yet the outcome was to focus on the south. The reason should be stated outright. On a related note, if one of our goals was to reduce the state's imperiled waterways, then focusing our efforts on creating riparian corridors where they currently do not exist in the north would be a good strategy to do that.

Liz Jackson

Executive Director
Indiana Forestry & Woodland Owners Association

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jackson@purdue.edu

Cheryl Gettelfinger, Carmel Urban Forestry

Dear Sirs:

This letter is to provide input from the Carmel Urban Forestry Committee regarding your Indiana Statewide Forest Assessment. The Carmel Urban Forestry Committee began as a task force in the summer of 1993 and one year later became a tree board and adopted a tree ordinance. Our mission is to assist, advise and develop urban forestry programs for the City of Carmel. In addition, we participate in activities that emphasize education and maintenance of the urban forest.

The assessment could be improved by including the importance of educating Hoosiers as to the importance of our tree canopy. While it's important to check the long term viability in our rural areas, it's also important to preserve and improve the forestry conditions for our urban areas. While there may be a temptation to cut funding in our economy, the investments in urban forestry (all forestry for that matter) made today will more than pay themselves back in cleaner water, air and soil. In addition, education as to the importance of native trees, erosion, etc. can be made effectively through the Community and Urban Forestry program in the Division of Forestry.

Finally, our trees are a very cost effective way to keep our environment clean. They help absorb our rain water, help cleanse our air, hold our soils in place to prevent erosion and will allow us to bring in more recreation and tourism if we take the long view.

Sincerely,

Carmel Urban Forest Committee and
Cheryl Gettelfinger, President

Trish Eccles, Trees Inc.

Dear Mr. Seifert and Members of the DNR State Assessment Committee:

Because of personal time commitments, I have not reviewed the proposed strategic plan and hence have not formulated an opinion. Today is the deadline and I am still not where I can devote time to this.

April is the busiest month of the year for Hoosiers involved in urban forestry - it is the time when trees are planted and Arbor Day celebrations are held. The majority of this work is accomplished by volunteers with paid leadership provided at the state level through the Community and Urban Forestry Program, which is partially funded by federal funds, and at the local level, in some communities but not all, by city foresters. The Indiana Urban Forest Council is the umbrella organization for urban forestry non-profit organizations and its work is organized by a part-time paid employee, but volunteers form the core of the organization.

I am not confident that the value of the work done for the urban forest is recognized. My limited understanding of "non-urban forest" work is that it is designed for economic development for the landlord while providing benefits for the state through jobs or industry. Urban forestry work is essentially the opposite - it is designed to benefit every citizen who lives in a community or visits a community - the environmental benefit of city trees is complemented by the aesthetic value of the trees - and the majority of the work is accomplished by volunteer time and labor.

Would the urban forests in Indiana be where they are today without federal and state guidance? My answer is "no" and I justify this by my own experience.

My husband and I came to Indiana in 1990 because of his employment at Rose-Hulman. I was aware of Arbor Day 1991 ... and got very involved with TREES Inc. in 1992 and several years later leadership in IUFC.

TREES Inc. remains an all-volunteer organization with no paid staff: we have a post office box.

Where did TREES turn to for leadership on "how to function?" The state: Burney Fischer and John Parry were in leadership roles at that time - and both encouraged TREES and helped TREES set a very high bar for performance and goals.

The difference in Terre Haute today is astounding. The work of TREES, now supplemented by the City Urban Forester, is very very visible. I am not where I can send you the insert that TREES included in its fundraising campaign - currently underway - where 20 years of work is outlined.

But – Please do not consider removing this service from the people of Indiana. This is a "blip on the radar screen" in the overall budget - but the value received per dollar is much more than a blip.

If you want people to live and thrive in communities in Indiana, it is imperative that "quality of life" support be continued.

You know the value of trees to a community - so I don't need to "preach to the choir."

What I hope you also understand and recognize is the value of the support system that is currently in place and the need to keep it there. You are supporting hundreds of volunteers and volunteer hours. These are the backbone of the urban forestry program - and these are not "self-serving" in any way.

Could you please let me know that this e-mail has been received?

Thank you,

Trish Eccles
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Terre Haute, IN 47803
812-877-3125
trish@eccles.net

As an Urban Forestry Volunteer, my leadership time is spent as:

President, TREES Inc., Terre Haute, Indiana
Chairman, City Tree Advisory Board, Terre Haute, Indiana
Member IUFC Board of Directors

Tim Maloney, Hoosier Environmental Council

April 16, 2010

To the Indiana DNR Division of Forestry:

We commend the IDNR on the forest assessment process and progress made to date on the assessment document. There is an impressive amount of data and information presented. We offer the following comments and suggestions.

General comments

We recommend more discussion of trends in forest status—acreage lost, acreage gained, change in acres of forests protected from conversion, for example, and the factors affecting these circumstances. There is a map on the cover page entitled “Forest Change 1992-2009”, but no discussion of this in the text.

A discussion of the state of affairs in forest conservation and management funding should be included, since funding to address the various forest issues identified in the assessment will be a key consideration in the forest strategy document that follows.

For document design, there could be more consideration of regional conditions, “zooming” down to notably important areas or hot spots of conservation concern.

We recommend including major rivers, streams and lakes as part of the base map layer along with county boundaries.

For additional background on specific topics, the document should refer readers to the sources for factual statements or for a fuller discussion of a topic. For example, on page 33, the discussion of the factors contributing to Indiana’s oak-hickory component, add something like, “For more information on this topic, see _____”, and include the source cite in Appendix D.

On Priority Landscape Areas Analysis, the maps generally emphasize those areas with high existing forest values or conservation opportunities. This is valuable in identifying priorities for immediate action, but tends to de-emphasize longer term, restoration-type opportunities which would contribute to Indiana’s forest biodiversity, and protect soil and water resources. For example, the data indicates that there might be opportunities to restore or establish forested corridors along a number of Indiana’s major rivers, such as the Wabash, White, Patoka, and Kankakee Rivers.

Fragmentation section

We recommend expanding the discussion about projected development patterns to 2030 to include consideration of the factors affecting these patterns, which is more than just population growth. Zoning and other land use practices, loss of urban tax base, and population migration

also contribute to more land development and forest fragmentation in the areas surrounding urban centers. We call your attention to a 2008 report, Increasing Unincorporation (Indiana Business Research Center, www.incontext.indiana.edu) about the rate of population growth in Indiana's unincorporated areas compared to incorporated areas.

Invasives section

The map of Maintained Corridors through Forests on page 29 would be more effective if the corridors were depicted as lines rather than color shading.

Biodiversity section

The analysis and maps of forest patches in this section are very helpful.

Mention examples of the Rare Forest Communities depicted in the map on page 36.

The color shadings on the Forest Biodiversity Potential map on page 38 are difficult to discern.

Wood Products section

This section recognizes the many economic benefits of forests and wood products. We recommend additional discussion of the non-monetary benefits of forests, including carbon storage which is now being monetized and traded in international markets.

The biomass discussion should reference the need for a careful evaluation of the sustainability of woody biomass as an energy fuel, and the possible impacts of this type of forest use on Indiana's existing forest industry which emphasizes high quality hardwood timber products.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

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